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HOW TO TEACH YOURSELF TO SWIM

THERE are four excellent reasons why everyone should learn to swim:

1. Swimming is one of the most healthful forms of exercise.

2. It is a pleasurable activity in which the majority of people have opportunity to indulge.

3. It may at some time enable you to save your own life.

4. It may be the means of your saving the life of another.

These four reasons are indisputable and yet many people do not know how to swim. In some cases they lack the initiative, in some the facilities, in some a competent instructor. Many people do not realize that they can be their own instructor. This method of acquiring the skill is not the most desirable, and if an experienced teacher is available it always would be wise to engage his services. However, lacking such opportunity, with determination and perseverance, you can teach yourself. An indoor pool is the best place for the undertaking, but the same methods may be used in shallow water out-of-doors.

The first step is to become thoroughly at home in the water. Standing in the shallows, put your face under the water several times. Repeat this, opening your eyes when your face is under, and endeavor to discern some object on the bottom. Always remember to take a breath before submerging and keep a slight pressure of air out through the nostrils to prevent water entering the nose. Sit on the bottom a few times.

When these things can be done with ease, try floating. Begin on a front float: Taking a breath, bend at the waist and stretch the arms above the head, lying face down

on the water and gradually lifting, first one leg, then the other, until both are at the surface. Lie in a relaxed position: Try the same thing with a push off from the side of the pool. To regain an upright position, simply bend at the waist, pull the knees under the body, push down with the arms, and stand.

Now try a back float: Lie back on the water, extending the hands sideward and upward, and slowly raise the feet from the bottom until you are lying easily on the surface. Be sure you are in a fully extended position, but relaxed and not rigid. To stand, bend well forward, rounding the back and when the head is over the feet, scoop the arms forward and put the feet down.

Next learn to breathe correctly: Always inhale through the mouth and exhale forcibly through the nose. This prevents choking. Practice this first on land and then in the water, putting the face under for the exhalation. Continue to exhale until the face is out of the water again. Practice until you can do this with ease for at least fifty successive times. Then review floating, both back and front.

Now you are ready to start practicing the flutter kick. Face the side of the pool, grasp the rail or gutter and extend the body straight out behind flat on the surface of the water. Thrash up and down with the legs, making the movement from the hips with only a slight knee bend, ankles relaxed, and toes turned in. Make the movement short and not too fast to begin with, concentrating on obtaining relaxation especially at the ankles. When this is mastered, turn around, push off in a face float and after you have started to glide, begin your flutter kick. Practice this until you can go some distance, taking a breath when necessary.

The next step is to practice the flutter kick and breathing together. Grasp the side of the pool, take a front float position, and breathe rhythmically, turning the head to the side out of the water for each inhalation and executing a flutter kick the while.

Now start to work on the arm pull. Leaning forward until the shoulders are on or near the water surface, reach forward with the left arm and put the right arm by the right side. Pull down through the water with the left arm and raise the right, bringing it forward to the side and above the water. Now the right arm is forward and the left is completing the pull. Now pull down with the right and bring the left forward ready for the next pull. Remember the arms should work in opposition—the one pulling through the water while the other is recovering above the water. Work on this until ease of movement is achieved.

Next try putting arm and leg movements together. Take a front float position and, using the flutter kick, pull alternately with the arms at the same time. If you experience difficulty, go back and review each part separately until it is fully mastered and then try again. Each step may be practiced to advantage on land and such practice will give added facility. Even the breathing may be tried in a wash basin at home!

Now try to swim, breathing on each stroke by turning the head always to the same side and inhaling under the arm that is recovering. If you have at last learned to swim with ease, learn to tread water. This is executed in a vertical position. The scissors kick may be used, opening and closing the legs with an action similar to that of the blades of a pair of scissors, or you may alternately bend and straighten each knee, using a movement much like that employed in walking upstairs. The palms of the hands are pushed down against the water, making small movements close to the side of the body.

Now start swimming in water where the

depth is such that you can just touch bottom with the toes. Stop and tread water, then swim again. Do not be discouraged if your progress is slow. Remember anything worth accomplishing is worth working for. Do not venture into deep water until you swim with ease, and even then do not make a trial unless you have an experienced swimmer along. In fact, "Never swim alone" is an excellent maxim to be followed by all, even the best swimmers. In addition it is wise not to swim for an hour or two after eating.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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MIRIAM FARIES

THE 1930 MAY-DAY FESTIVAL

A GLIMMER of an idea for this year's May-day festival was seen in the first two sentences of The Introduction to Lincoln's *The Festival Book*: "May-day in olden times was celebrated in many and various ways. Druids celebrated the modified feast of Bel on the First of May." Further information was gleaned from the American Physical Education Review, vol. 32: "The druidic celebration of the Fires of Beltein was more than a May month festival." And finally, after some research, this passage was found in MacCulloch's *Religion of the Ancient Celts*: . . . "Kindled Beltein, or the fire of the rock, on May-eve to welcome the Sun after his travels behind the clouds and tempests of the dark months. On the night before, all other fires were extinguished, and all repaired to the holy mount to pay their annual tribute to the Druids. . . . There were solemn rites . . . after which the fires were all relighted, each from the sacred fire—" It was from these few tidbits that our story grew.